

Forsaking the Assembly of Christian Brethren

In the grand tapestry of divine revelation, the assembly of Christian brethren stands as a testament to the unity and strength of faith. The scriptures, from the Psalms to the Epistles, weave a narrative that underscores the importance of gathering together in worship and fellowship. Psalm 22:22 speaks of declaring the name of the Lord in the midst of the assembly, a proclamation of faith that resonates through the ages. Similarly, Hebrews 10:25 admonishes believers not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, a poignant reminder of the communal nature of faith that is echoed in the practices of the early church, as seen in Acts 11:26, where believers were first called Christians in Antioch, gathering together in unity of purpose and spirit.

The Chronicles, both 1 and 2, offer insights into the collective worship and decision-making of God's people, as exemplified in 1 Chronicles 13:2 and 2 Chronicles 29:15, where the assembly is central to the consecration and service to the Lord. The New Testament continues this theme, with the church in Corinth, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:15, being commended for their dedication to the service of the saints, a service that is both personal and collective. The church that meets in the house of Nympha in Colossians

4:15, and the one mentioned in 3 John 1:10, where hospitality and acceptance are paramount, further illustrate the intimate nature of the Christian assembly.

The acts of the apostles, particularly in Acts 15:22 and Acts 28:17, demonstrate the importance of coming together to deliberate, to encourage, and to strengthen one another in the faith. The epistles, too, are rich with exhortations to unity and mutual support, as seen in 2 Corinthians 8:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:14, where the churches are encouraged to emulate one another in generosity and steadfastness in the face of persecution. The Old Testament narratives, such as Joshua's call for help in Joshua 10:6 and the assembly's role in the coronation of King Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:2, reveal the assembly's role in critical moments of decision and transition.

The warnings against forsaking the assembly, as in Leviticus 10:6 and Numbers 25:6, serve as sobering reminders of the consequences of turning away from the prescribed worship and community. Yet, the assembly is not just about admonition; it is also about celebration and honor, as seen in Esther 10:3, where Mordecai's esteem within the assembly of his people is noted. The wisdom literature, too, such as James 4:11, advises against speaking evil against one another, emphasizing the harmony that should prevail within the assembly.

In the prophetic and apocalyptic visions of Revelation, the assembly takes on an eschatological dimension, with Revelation 19:10 and 22:9 pointing believers to the worship of God alone, a worship that is both individual and collective, transcending time and space. The assembly, therefore, is not merely a gathering; it is a foretaste of the heavenly congregation, a mirror of the divine fellowship, and a beacon of hope for a fractured world. It is in this sacred convocation that the faithful are nurtured, disciplined, and prepared for the glorious day of the Lord, as they echo the words of encouragement and perseverance found throughout the sacred texts. Thus, the assembly of Christian brethren, as a divine institution, remains a cornerstone of spiritual life, a conduit of grace, and a symbol of the eternal kingdom.